DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 195 950 CS 005 762

TITLE	An Evaluation of the Right to Read Inexpensive Book Distribution Program. Executive Summary.
INSTITUTION	General Research Corp., McLean, Va.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Oct 80
CONTRACT	300-78-0400
NOTE	41p.; For related document see CS 005 763.
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary Secondary Education; *Literature Appreciation; *Program Effectiveness; *Program Evaluation; Reading Habits; *Reading Interests; Reading Programs; Recreational Reading; *Student Motivation
IDENTIFIERS	*Reading Is Fundamental

ABSTRACT

This document is an executive summary of a study examining the Inexpensive Book Distribution Program (IBDP), a federally funded and sponsored program operated by Reading is Fundamental (RIF). Sections of the report provide the following information: (1) methodology and procedures for conducting the study, (2) a brief description of RIF national management, (3) summaries of six community-based IBDPs and 38 IBDP site reports, (4) reports on eight alternative book distribution programs, (5) an analysis of elementary and secondary school students' survey responses, and (6) a summary of observations and recommendations. (RL)

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Report 1067-04-80-CR

An Evaluation of the Right to Read Inexpensive Book Distribution Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

October 1980

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS DIVISION

GENERAL RESEARCH CORPORATION

A SUBSIDIARY OF FLOW GENERAL INC.

7655 Old Springhouse Road, McLean, Virginia 22102

Submitted To:

Mr. James Gannon
Department of Education (ED)
400 Maryland Ave, S.W.
ROB No. 3, Room 5715
Washington, D.C. 20202

Contract No. 300-78-0400

CS085762

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

This document reports the results of a study of the Inexpensive Book Distribution Program (IBDP). The IBDP is a Federally funded and sponsored program operated by Reading is Fundamental, Inc. (RIF). A brief introduction to RIF and the IBDP is provided in the following paragraphs.

RIF began in 1966 as an experiment in Washington, D.C., to determine whether providing books to children would increase their motivation to read. As a result of testimonials to the success of this experiment, the number of RIF projects grew to over 713, operating in 48 states. RIF is supported almost exclusively by private funds, attracting such organizations as the Ford Foundation, and also individuals and corporations (IBM, Ford Motor Co., ALCOA, Texaco, and others). RIF is a nonprofit organization.

The National Reading Improvement Program enacted in 1974 and amended in 1975 authorized the Commissioner of Education to contract for a reading motivation program based on the distribution of inexpensive books to students in pre-elementary, elementary, and secondary schools. The rationale given for the establishment of this program is that motivation has been the missing ingredient in teaching children to read. The objective of this program is to increase their motivation by creating a desire to read, and showing that reading can be fun, rather than a chore.

Congress appropriated $4 million for the operation of this program in FY 1976, $5 million in FY 1977, and $6 million in FY 1978. Of the money appropriated in FY 1976, over $600,000 was designated for IBDP administration and technical assistance, with the remaining funds to be used to purchase books. In FY 1977, $1.1 million was designated for administration and assistance, while $3.9 million was to be used for books.

In September 1976, the US Office of Education (USOE) contracted with RIF to operate the IBDP and to provide technical assistance to local projects conducting reading motivation programs that used the inexpensive book distribution technique. Local projects buy the books (at discount prices). Originally Federal funds paid 50% of the price, and the rest was obtained through local project matching funds. Currently the division is 75-25%.

RIF continues to operate its original program funded by private contributions at about the same level as before it undertook to administer the Federally funded IBDP. The IBDP is patterned on the RIF program. RIF as the IBDP contractor functions as follows:

- Assumes general responsibility for operating IBDP, including overseeing the administrative and matching funds made available by the USOE.
- Funds local projects which agree to operate a reading motivation program through the distribution of inexpensive books.
- Provides technical assistance to local projects in areas of planning, ordering books, raising funds, conducting motivational activities, and distributing books.
- Negotiates discounts with book suppliers who want to participate in the program (these include publishers as well as distributors).
- Coordinates all Federal and local payments to suppliers for books purchased by projects.
- Serves as a national clearinghouse for information regarding the RIF IBDP and for information on paperback children's literature, reading motivation, Federal legislation, and Federal funding.
- Mobilizes support and sponsorship of RIF projects by national organizations (e.g., American Association of University Women, Urban League, Junior League).

STUDY OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF WORK

The specific objectives of the study were:

(1) To determine the effectiveness of the IBDP in generating reading motivation.

(2) To describe the process by which books are acquired and distributed to children.

The USOE contracted originally for a two-phase study. Phase I was to consist of design and developmental activities (formulation of the study design, instrument design, development of the data collection plan). Phase II was to consist of data collection and reporting.

In order to meet the two study objectives, GRC implemented a two-part research program corresponding to these. Part One involved the investigation of the effectiveness of the IBDP in generating reading motivation. This aspect of the research required the identification of the dependent variable, reading motivation, and the independent variables which contribute to or are incorporated in the motivation to read. Independent variables include program characteristics, self-reports on attitudes and behaviors, observations of teachers and parents, and demographic variables. Part Two can best be described as an investigation of the IBDP process--a descriptive assessment of the design, management, and administration of the IBDP in terms of program objectives and efficiency. This included a major literature search, understanding and structuring of intervention variables, and the use of case studies.

By January 1980, GRC had completed all Phase I contract tasks (design and developmental activities) and half of Phase II tasks, including the initial data collection effort involving experimental and comparison groups, data from IBDP subcontractors, alternative book distribution programs, and the national RIF IBDP office. At this point contract funds were nearly depleted, and GRC entered into negotiations for additional funds to carry out the second or follow-up data collection effort.

Funds to complete the study as it was originally designed were not available, and consequently the scope of the work was modified. Contract modifications resulted in the cancellation of follow-up data collection activities, and GRC was declared responsible for developing a descriptive final study report (this document). Its remaining sections cover the following topics:

- Methodology and procedures for the conduct of the study (Section 2)
- RIF national management (Section 3)
- Case studies of six unique RIF IBDPs (Section 4)
- Description of data collection sites (Section 5)
- Alternative book distribution programs (ABDPs) (Section 6)
- Analysis of survey responses (Section 7)
- Summary observations and recommendations (Section 8)

RIF NATIONAL MANAGEMENT

GRC surveyed the RIF National Management System from the perspective of three general organizational components:

- Mission and Objectives
- Organization Structure
- Information System

Within each of these components, specific elements of the system were assessed to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the overall management strategy of National RIF.

Mission and Objectives

GRC examined the steps taken by RIF in policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring. In light of RIF's responsibility for 3000 ongoing projects, it was concluded that the management system was effective and efficient regarding the missions and objectives of the organization. The various monitoring mechanisms (application process, performance reports, written and telephone technical assistance, regional coordinators and other technical assistance staff, and the Smithsonian

Institution as monitoring agent) functioned adequately in monitoring policy implementation. It was concluded that National RIF should direct additional effort to planning, since one of the most crucial components of program growth was attention to planning. Further research on the impact of RIF IBDPs on the number of books in the homes of RIF participants would provide supporting evidence for the premise that RIF increased books in the home. Additional information about RIF IBDP subcontractors gained through a questionnaire survey would allow the national staff to more adequately meet the technical assistance needs of local subcontractors.

Organizational Structure

GRC addressed the topics of authority and responsibility, span of control, staff expertise, communications, and work flow. While the National RIF organizational structure was found to experience problems (e.g., staffing and work flow during peak activity periods), these problems were adequately solved with a minimum of disruption. The study team concluded that the organizational structure of RIF was highly functional and was effective in facilitating the attainment of RIF objectives.

Information System

The National RIF information system was surveyed in terms of documents moving through the system, storage retrieval, monitoring of information, and information accuracy. In general, the study team found the system to be adequate. Areas of concern included:

- A slow down in the movement of essential documents during peak activity periods.
- The lack of computer assistance for the storage and retrieval of information (a computer system was being implemented at the time of the study team visit).
- The level of accuracy of information about the RIF effort, e.g., number of schools served projects, number of children served by projects, funding level of projects, status of book suppliers, etc.

It was found that:

- Part-time employees reduce the problem of slow down of documents moving through the system during peak activity periods.
- A planned computer assisted information system should resolve the problem of information storage and retrieval.
- An increase in the accuracy of current information about RIF projects would probably not be sufficiently valuable to justify the costs for achieving a higher level of accuracy.

CASE STUDIES

The majority of RIF IBDPs (82%) were school based. Community-based projects (18%) served various special groups, and GRC selected six of them for investigation (in addition to the school sites). Four of these comprised principally Native Americans, migrants, juvenile offenders and preschoolers. Two were projects that had participated in RIF before Federal funding. Summaries of the six special investigations follow.

Wind River Indian Reservation Project

The Wind River Indian Reservation project provided insights into special needs which must be considered in conducting a reading motivation program for Indian children. It should be emphasized that these observations were based on the results of a limited sample. Nationwide, each Indian tribe has its own characteristics and mores; thus, generalizations about educational motivation programs for Indians must be made with caution and must be tested against the experience of the individual tribal groups.

Hartford RIF Volunteer Program

The Hartford RIF Volunteer Program, which is the oldest continuous RIF program, has grown from 7 schools to 32 and hopes to serve all children in grades 1-8 during the 1979-80 school year. This program had little parent participation and had experienced some teacher reluctance to participate in the program. The coordinator worked diligently to develop an integrated volunteer effort and pursue motivational activities which would excite even the most reluctant teacher to participate.

Tucson Public Library Project

The Tucson Public Library project was aimed at preschoolers and their parents with the hope of stimulating interest in reading books to young prereaders. The experience of the Tucson Public Library RIF program provided potentially helpful insight along several dimensions:

- The management of large-scale RIF projects.
- A RIF program for preschoolers at day care centers.
- The role of the public library as a RIF sponsor.

Dallas Independent School District RIF Program

The Dallas Independent School District RIF program was one of the most successful due to the local community support which it had received. The community worked in support of the school system and both were dedicated to achieving the common goal of making reading a rewarding and pleasurable activity.

The RIF program in conjunction with the Essential Reading Skills which is sponsored by the Dallas Independent School system program has raised reading scores, increased hardcover book circulation in the school libraries, and has made parents partners in their children's learning process.

Texas Migrant Council Project

The Texas Migrant Council (TMC) project served 3-5 year olds in 25 Head Start centers. When the children first came to the center they were monolingual, had less than adequate Spanish verbal skills, and many had parents who could not read. The RIF program was intended to interface with the basic Head Start curriculum plan, and at the same time teach parents the skills learned by the children--using the RIF books as the vehicle.

The TMC RIF program appeared to have the potential for strengthening the Head Start program objectives for these migrant children, particularly with regard to basic skills, English as a second language, and parent involvement components. Additionally, RIF distributions added to the child's experience in year round education programs.

Rikers Island Project

Rikers Island is an adolescent holding institution for the New York Department of Corrections. The three adolescent inmate dwellings at the facility participated in the RIF IBDP. The correction department educational service director initiated the program in 1978 with the assistance of the New York Public Library. The program had been viewed by the correctional administration as "highly successful," and as an opportunity to give inmates "a tiny measure of what they had lost."

The prison libraries saw the program as a valuable asset to the library. The majority of paperback and hardcover books were being used and inmates were requesting more books. RIF IBDP provided the means for them to get more books.

Because of the uniqueness of the program, a number of national program guidelines were not applicable. Since the inmates are held for a limited time at Rikers Island, three books were distributed to each individual.

SUMMARY OF RIF IBDP PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

The 38 RIF IBDP site reports contain in Section 5 of the report describe RIF IBDPs in terms of subcontractor (sponsor) organization and operating characteristics. The following paragraphs summarize the general characteristics of the RIF IBDP projects described in the site reports. These summaries are presented in terms of the following subcontractor program characteristics:

- Subcontractor administration and operational characteristics
- RIF IBDP funding sources
- Book selection and acquisition activities
- Student/parent and volunteer participation in RIF
- RIF loan program

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Student demographics for the students surveyed at the 38 sites are depicted in Tables 1 through 4. The demographics are representative of surveyed RIF and non-RIF sutdents and not the total site population. Socioeconomic status (SES) was determined by free lunch eligibility. Students eligible for free lunch were considered to be lower in SES than non-eligible students.

SUBCONTRACTOR ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION CHARACTERISTICS

Sponsorship

RIF IBDPs are sponsored by a wide variety of public and private agencies. As reported in Table 5, of the 38 RIF IBDPs studied in this project, 10 were sponsored by individual schools, 18 were sponsored by school districts, 1 was sponsored by a library, 4 were sponsored by Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) or Parent Teacher Organizations

TABLE 1

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY BY GRADE FOR ALL SITES

GRADE	SITE	N%	GENDER			N%	RACE						N%	SOCIAL ECONOMIC STATUS		
	KEY 1-39		MALE	FEMALE	MISSING DATA		AMERICAN INDIAN	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC	WHITE	MISSING DATA		FREE LUNCH	NO FREE LUNCH	MISSING DATA
1	1, 3, 6, 16, 22, 24, 34, 36, 37	6.34	54.23	46.84	.73	7.10	12.48	.36	9.60	6.76	70.66	4.37	7.19	32.01	61.76	26.23
2	4, 8, 10, 11, 14, 19, 29, 26, 32, 34, 36, 37, 38	12.63	50.03	48.24	1.73	13.37	.66	1.26	25.41	1.09	71.30	.39	13.36	24.94	66.26	8.76
3	1, 3, 7, 16, 17, 22, 24, 26, 34, 36, 37	9.66	52.67	46.62	.39	10.57	3.97	.39	13.60	6.66	75.00	1.46	10.57	30.37	66.23	13.46
4	2, 3, 6, 16, 11, 16, 17, 26, 28, 26, 34, 37	11.64	51.13	46.14	2.73	12.86	3.66	1.67	6.66	1.46	82.26	6.66	12.66	16.26	63.67	17.73
6	3, 6, 6, 22, 2*, 26, 37, 39	7.73	51.46	46.16	.39	8.26	.36	2.16	6.46	16.26	61.52	.36	8.26	24.14	67.67	7.67
6	2, 7, 11, 14, 16, 16, 27, 37	.77	46.63	46.61	.26	8.46	.66	2.67	21.72	1.13	66.61	3.37	8.26	31.66	61.66	6.27
7	6, 12, 13, 16, 16, 26, 36	11.16	47.37	46.26	3.43	11.01	.36	.44	16.27	23.67	64.64	3.26	11.62	26.76	66.66	3.66
8	3, 6, 12, 1-, 36	6.26	44.66	52.46	2.7	6.76	0	1.62	16.62	6.16	73.77	2.27	6.76	16.21	76.31	6.47
9	4, 12, 14, 16, 21, 23, 31, 33	6.74	51.31	46.64	.14	7.16	.14	.67	26.66	.73	66.76	6.26	7.16	16.76	72.66	16.24
10	6, 26, 23, 26, 31, 33	6.36	47.67	61.66	.46	6.77	.16	.46	26.37	1.23	61.46	.26	6.76	16.26	71.63	6.76
11	23, 26, 32	4.64	43.66	66.14	.64	4.66	0	.43	6.36	.63	62.37	.21	4.66	16.16	66.63	0
12	6, 16, 21, 23	2.76	62.14	47.66	.36	2.63	0	0	6.63	1.42	66.64	0	2.63	6.42	63.21	.36
N =		6627				6633							6626			

NOTE: ALL FIGURES ARE CALCULATED BY PERCENTAGE EXCEPT N REPRESENTS NUMBER

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TABLE 2

SES BY RIF AND NONRIF

	RIF	NonRIF
Free Lunch	25.8%	26.3%
No Free Lunch	74.2%	73.7%
Total N 8547	4568	3979

TABLE 3

SES BY RACE*

	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White
Free Lunch	5.3%	21%	49.3%	64.1%	15.4%
No Free Lunch	11.2%	73%	41.6%	31.2%	77.9%
Total N 9529	170	100	1561	532	6920

*Columns will not represent 100% due to missing values.

TABLE 4

SES BY READING LEVEL*

	Above Average	Average	Below Average
Free Lunch	12.2%	18.6%	37.2%
No Free Lunch	78.9%	71.5%	52.6%
Total N 9529	2052	3926	3002

*Columns will not represent 100% due to missing values.

TABLE 5

IBDP SPONSORS

Site	School	School District	Library	Community Group	PTA & PTO
1	X		X		
2					
3					X
4					X
5		X			
6		X			
7		X			
8		X			
9		X			
10		X			
11				X	
12	X				
13				X	
14	X				
15		X			
16		X			
17		X			
18		X			
19					X
20		X			
21				X	
22					X
23				X	
24		X			
25		X			
26	X				
27	X				
28		X			
29	X				
30		X			
31		X			
32	X				
33		X			
34	X				
35				X	
36		X			
37	X				
38	X				
TOTAL	10	18	1	5	4

(PTOs), and 5 were sponsored by community groups (subcontractor sponsors) such as women's clubs, civic groups (e.g., Lions and Rotary), and junior auxiliaries.

Scope of RIF IBDP Access

With the exception of RIF IBDPs sponsored by school districts and community groups, sponsors supported projects in individual schools.

Of the 18 school-district-sponsored RIF IBDPs, 6 operated RIF programs in all schools in the district. The remaining 12 school-district-sponsored programs served only selected schools. (In some cases, the schools in which school-district-sponsored programs were offered differed from year to year.) In the 6 school districts in which RIF IBDPs operated in all schools, RIF IBDPs generally served all elementary grades. In the remaining 12 district-sponsored programs, the number of grades served in individual schools ranged from selected grades in elementary, middle, and senior high schools to all grades 1-6 in elementary schools.

Coordination

RIF IBDPs were coordinated at the local level by: district representatives; librarians, principals, reading specialists, and teachers from individual schools; and representatives of sponsoring groups. As reported in Table 6, of the 38 sites studied in this project, 17 were coordinated by district representatives, 3 by librarians, 6 by school principals, 12 by reading specialists or other teachers, and 3 by sponsoring community groups.

District representatives coordinating RIF IBDPs were Federal program coordinators; district reading specialists; district librarians; and, in one case, a district English specialist. Of the 18 RIF IBDPs sponsored by school districts, 17 were coordinated by district representatives and 1 by a reading specialist who served 5 schools in the district.

TABLE 6

IBDP COORDINATORS

Site	District Representative	Librarian	Principal	Reading Specialist	Teacher	Community Group
1		X				
2			X			
3						X
4	X					
5	X					
6	X					
7	X					
8	X					
9				X		
10	X					
11	X		X	X	X	
12			X			
13						X
14				X		
15	X					
16	X					
17	X					
18	X					
19						
20	X					
21				X		X
22						
23				X		
24	X					
25	X					
26			X			
27				X		
28	X					
29		X				
30		X				
31	X					
32				X		
33	X					
34				X		
35			X			
36	X					
37				X		
38				X		
Totals	18	3	5	10	1	3

The responsibilities of RIF IBDP coordinators ranged from the simple management of forms and coordination with national RIF to the total administration of the local RIF IBDP. Responsibilities assigned to RIF IBDP coordinators included:

- Selection of schools to participate in the program.
- Selection and supervision of program coordinators at individual schools.
- Management of the total book selection, book ordering, and distribution process.
- Recruitment, training, and supervision of local volunteers.
- Coordination of local fund-raising activities.

When the coordinators were asked what suggestion they had for improving the coordination procedures between the local and national levels, 25% had none. The main concern of the remaining 75% was the length of time it took for publishers to be paid. The subcontractors had been dunned by the publishers until payment was received from RIF national. Other suggestions were to have regional technical assistance meetings to provide technical assistance for program improvement, to respond more quickly to requests for materials, to designate one contact person (name and phone numbers) for the subcontractor to work with, to provide background for national staff on public school administrative procedures, and to have a hotline or toll-free number to RIF national.

Table 7 summarizes the response to the question, "Have you received any special assistance or guidance from the RIF National Office?" It is interesting to note that the majority of assistance is by phone, thus increasing the need for a designated contact person and a toll-free number.

RIF IBDP Funding Sources

RIF IBDP matching funds are derived from five major sources: school district funds, state (general education and/or library funds),

TABLE 7

ASSISTANCE FROM RIF NATIONAL

RIF Assistance Given*		Manner in Which RIF Assistance Was Given**				Degree of Helpfulness of RIF Assistance*		
Yes	No	Onsite	Telephone	Mail	Regional Meeting	Very Helpful	Helpful	Not Helpful
79%	13%	32%	68%	34%	5%	53%	21%	3%

*Percentages may not total 100% due to nonresponse.

**Percentages may not total 100% due to multiple response.

private donations, civic and community group fund-raising activities, and fund-raising activities undertaken by the school or school district.

As reported in Table 8, of the 38 RIF IBDPs studied, 10 derived their local share of the program funding from school district budgets, 3 from state revenue sources, 6 through private donations, 7 from civic or community groups, and 21 from fund-raising activities undertaken by schools or school districts.

Of the 28 RIF IBDPs sponsored by schools and/or school districts, only 13 used school revenues and/or state funds to provide the local match for RIF funds. The remaining 15 school/school-district-sponsored programs raised their local matching funds through a combination of fund-raising activities and donations from private sources and/or civic and community groups. Fund-raising means included: bake sales, book fairs, suppers, raffles, dances, and rummage sales.

Table 9 gives per pupil expenditures based on funding level and number of students served. Per pupil expenditure was found not to have decreased as project size increased, nor was a correlation found between per pupil expenditure and grade level.

A number of the programs visited had received free books from Xerox Corporation. The Xerox books were used to supplement RIF IBDP books. Xerox had given books to 10 of the 38 projects.

Book Selection

Local book selection committees were composed of school principals (2), librarians (27), teachers (31), parents (33) and other community volunteers (33), members of RIF IBDP sponsoring groups (14), and students (10). See Table 10.

Book Distribution

The 51 individual elementary, middle, and secondary RIF IBDP schools visited in this study engaged in a wide variety of pre-/actual/

TABLE 8

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Site	Fund Raising Activities	State Contributions or Library Money	Private Donations	Community Groups	School District
1		X	X		
2	X				
3	X				X
4				X	
5	X				
6					X
7					
8	X				
9					X
10					X
11	X		X		
12				X	
13	X				
14	X				X
15					X
16	X				
17		X		X	
18	X		X	X	
19	X				
20	X		X	X	
21				X	
22	X				
23	X				
24				X	
25					X
26	X				
27	X				
28			X		
29					X
30					X
31					X
32	X				
33	X		X		
34	X				
35	X				
36		X			
37	X				
38	X				
NO COMBINATION 21		3	6	7	10
WITH COMBINATION 6			5	3	0

TABLE 9

PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE

Project Size	Per Pupil Expenditure	
	Range	Average
Small (1-500 students)	$.80-1.60	$1.04
Medium (501-2500 students)	$.72-2.22	$ .96
Large (2501 and up students)	$.58-2.27	$1.05

TABLE 10

MEMBERS OF BOOK SELECTION COMMITTEES

Site	Principals	Parents and/or Volunteers	Sponsors	Librarians	Teachers	Students
1		X	X	X		
2	X	X				X
3		X		X		
4		X	X	X	X	X
5						
6	X	X		X	X	X
7					X	
8		X		X	X	
9		X		X	X	
10		X	X	X	X	
11		X		X	X	
12		X		X	X	
13		X	X	X	X	
14					X	
15		X	X	X	X	
16		X	X	X	X	
17		X		X	X	
18		X	X	X	X	
19		X		X		
20		X	X		X	
21		X	X	X	X	
22		X		X	X	
23		X	X	X	X	
24		X		X	X	
25		X		X	X	X
26		X	X	X	X	X
27				X	X	
28		X	X		X	
29		X			X	
30		X		X	X	
31		X	X	X	X	X
32		X			X	
33		X		X		X
34				X		X
35		X			X	
36		X	X		X	X
37		X	X	X	X	
38		X			X	
Total	2	33	14	21	31	10

postdistribution activities. These included simple activities such as predistribution notifications to parents of an upcoming distribution, distributional activities consisting of simply bringing children to the library to select a book, and elaborately planned dramas designed to build students' anticipation and excitement about the gala day-long distribution. Postdistribution activities ranged from Sustained Silent Reading of RIF IEDP books to story-telling hours where book authors were invited to discuss the stories with children. Table 11 summarizes the variety of pre-/actual/postdistribution activities observed in this study.

TABLE 11

DISTRIBUTION ACTIVITIES

Pre	Actual	Post
Class advertisements	Parades	Book talks
Notes to parents	Robot	Book reports
Poster contest	Book party	Poster distribution
Class discussion	Book markers	Principal wears a long tie with stripes, cuts off stripes as children read books
Book plate contest	Skits (Celebrities brought in)	Silent reading time
Book contests with puzzles	RIF Christmas	Book cover design
News articles	RIF rallies	Letter to authors
TV announcements	Refreshments	Visiting authors
RIF stamp contest	Birthday book	Book swaps
Mystery guests	Singers and other entertainment	Read-ins
RIF trees		Thank you letters to PTA President
Radio announcements		Questionnaires
Costume design for RIF Day		March of Dimes Reading Olympics
		Pen pal students

Participation of Students/Parents/Volunteers in RIF IBDP

Students/parents/volunteers participated in many aspects of RIF IBDPs. As previously noted, parents and volunteers served on the book selection committees of over 75% of the RIF IBDPs. Parents and volunteers also provided assistance to many aspects of the book ordering and distribution process and aided RIF IBDP coordinators in many aspects of predistributional activity planning and management. (See Table 12.)

When volunteers were enthusiastic and excited, the programs were much more creative and, from the point of view of the researcher, better. Strong volunteer support, effective organization, and enthusiastic leadership enhanced the program success.

Book Loan Program

The legislation authorizing the IBDPs allows sponsors to use up to 10% of their total funds for books to be distributed under loan programs to participants of the RIF IBDP. Of the program sites studied, 58% did not use RIF IBDP funds to purchase books for distribution under the authorized loan program. Of the 42% of the RIF IBDP schools who used RIF IBDP funds for books to be used in loan programs, the majority maintained RIF IBDP loan books separately from the library collections and distributed them by periodically taking a book cart from classroom to classroom throughout the year.

The projects which participated in loan programs felt that there were many benefits for students. Loan books:

- Provided more books for students to read and share.
- Provided popular books in greater quantity thereby easing choices during distributions.
- Served as an added motivational device.
- Gave students more leisure time to select books.

TABLE 12

PARENT AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Participated in book distribution by:
Setting up book display
Serving refreshments
Labeling/stamping books
Helping children locate books
Record keeping of books
Participating in skits
Collecting and storing books
Served as member of book selection committee
Participated in fund-raising projects
Served on RIF advisory council
Helped coordinate and carry out predistribution activities
Helped with follow-up activities

General Discussion of Perceptions Regarding RIF IBDP Projects

The RIF IBDP is in general enthusiastically supported by school personnel, parents, volunteers, and sponsoring community agencies and organizations at all the program sites studied in this project. Interestingly, however, local program personnel attributed very different benefits to the program.

In some instances, support for the program was based on personal views that RIF IBDP represented the only source of books which children had in their homes. Therefore, RIF IBDP constituted the only means by which an ongoing exposure to books could be created. When the subcontractors were asked in their opinion what were the objectives of RIF, 24% felt it was ownership of books—yet parent responses indicated students at all grade levels had books. When parents were asked if their child owned any books, over 90% responded yes; and when asked how many books the child had, 49.5% responded more than 25.

In other instances, support for RIF IBDP was based on perceptions that the "free choice" feature of the distributional activities increased student motivation to read which 36% of the subcontractors felt was the main objective.

Other proponents of the RIF IBDP found significant benefits in the effect which the program had on school-community and school-parent relations (7%). Still other respondents indicated that the RIF IBDP appeared to be a stimulus for a greater parental concern for, and involvement in, children's reading activities and school activities in general. All subcontractors felt that the students read the RIF books and that parents had become more involved in their children's reading.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Program

When the subcontractors were asked what in their opinion were the strengths of the overall program, 13% felt book ownership was the strongest point, and 11% felt enthusiasm for reading was the strongest

point. Other responses were community involvement and improvement in schools' public relations, increase in sustained silent reading, involvement of teachers and parents in recreational reading, involvement of students in the book selection process, and a minimal amount of paperwork.

The problem areas which were noted fell into two categories: those related to the books and those related to the program. The subcontractors were concerned about book storage, book ordering, book payment procedures, changing book orders, processing book orders, and the increased price of books. From the program perspective, they felt RIF national should provide technical assistance as soon as a project was funded. They felt that bookkeeping was becoming more cumbersome, that fund raising was more difficult (which should be lessened with the advent of 75-25 matches), and that the general negative attitude toward Federal programs was a problem.

ALTERNATIVE BOOK DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

To provide insights to the management functions, program operations, and target populations of a range of IBDPs, eight alternative book distribution program (ABDPs) were identified and examined by GRC. Although some ABDPs had components of the RIF IBDP, no program was comparable in size or scope to RIF.

The components of the program covered were philosophy, goals, scope, target audience, management aspects, and activities. Interviews were held with one or more representatives of each program.

Scholastic Publishing Company

Student book clubs have offered children reading materials at affordable prices for many years. Scholastic Publishing Company has offered a large variety of high motivation reading material by sponsoring six book clubs serving school audiences by grades. The material for each club has been geared to the age level served. The goal has been to get books into the hands of students thereby increasing their desire to read and pleasure in reading. The book clubs have also

offered teachers an opportunity to receive enrichment activities and games as well as books for their classroom libraries.

Michigan Paperback Book Program

The Michigan Paperback Book Program was established by the state legislature in 1976. The legislature appropriated $550,000 to be used as grants to school districts who wished to establish high interest paperback libraries in their local schools to encourage students to read.

The Michigan Department of Education Right to Read Program has been responsible for the administration and operation of the program. The underlying philosophy has been that the establishment of high interest paperback libraries may attract reluctant readers and stimulate them to read. Districts were required to provide matching funds equal to one-third of the state allotment.

Classroom Choices

Classroom Choices has operated as a national project sponsored by the International Reading Association (IRA). The program has provided free books to elementary school children in five selected cities each year. Children have read the books and cast votes for the best liked books. The children's top choices have been distributed nationwide to libraries by IRA and the Children's Book Council.

IRA has believed that children should have a voice in the type of books that are purchased by school and public libraries. By reviewing books, children have grown in their reading taste and have provided valuable insights to publishers, teachers, librarians, and parents on what they feel are good books. The program goals are threefold:

- To expose children to new books
- To instill in children that their opinions are worthwhile
- To provide libraries with information about children's likes and dislikes in books

Home Assisted Reading Program (H.A.R.P.)

The Home Assisted Reading Program (H.A.R.P.) of Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, has represented a cooperative endeavor between public and private schools to effect reading improvement in the community. The project has served 5000 students in two high schools and 158 families of these students. The goals have been to provide a home reading environment where everyone reads together at specific times during the week and thereby increases and improves reading without undue regard for the material read.

The philosophy has been that of Fader, espoused in The New Hooked on Books, which states that students who learn to associate both pleasure and necessity with acts of literacy will learn to read and write. The project has been supported by funds from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Education, ESEA Title IV, Part C Grant.

Summer Super Scoop

Summer Super Scoop is a learning guide written for parents to help them reinforce their children's reading and math skills through the use of the newspaper. The traditional summer vacation has often caused regression in basic reading and math skills. Parents can do much to mitigate this by involving their children in planned skill activities. Summer Super Scoop is a newspaper supplement which shows parents how to work with their children so that they sustain the gains they have made over the year. The goals of this program, sponsored by the Atlanta Constitution newspaper, have been:

- To actively involve parents in their children's education process
- To offer students opportunities to develop their learning skills during the summer
- To provide an educational service to the community

Xerox Education Publications

Xerox Education Publications ran a donation book service from 1977-79. A member of Xerox who was on the Board of Directors for RIF contacted many of the RIF subcontractors offering them free books. The idea was to provide schools and other organizations free books which they could use in their RIF programs. They could not select books but had to take what was offered, provide a place to store the books, and provide someone to unload them upon delivery. The goal was to provide books to as many sources as wanted them until the Xerox warehouse no longer had an overabundance of stored books. In the past, these books were destroyed. Donations have been targeted for use by school-age children ranging from kindergarten to high school.

Evin Foley Gift Book Program

The Evin Foley Gift Book Program has been essentially a one-person, totally volunteer program which seeks to give free books to populations which are generally not reached by book distribution systems. This free book distribution program has been in operation for 20 years and has served a variety of Massachusetts and neighboring state institutions, including adult and juvenile correction institutions, churches, hospitals, youth homes, and homes for the elderly.

The program has been a book give-away which donates thousands of books each year to targeted groups. Books have been obtained from anyone who will donate them--book suppliers, individuals, community groups, and foundations. Additionally, a small amount of money has been available to purchase books. This money has been received from the State Right to Read Program, donations from individuals, yard sales, and US Postal auctions.

The principal idea behind the program has been to "serve the unserved." The only condition placed upon the receiver institutions has been that books were to be given away rather than to be used to start libraries.

Goals of this free book give-away program have been to provide a therapeutic and recreational outlet as well as a learning stimulus for shut-in populations who have limited access to book purchase or selection.

Country Caravan

Country Caravan has been a Vermont-based children's book service operated by three women. They were qualified book fair distributors and have accounts with most major publishers as well as Vermont publishers and distributors.

The Country Caravan began in 1976 with the conviction that outstanding children's literature selections could be made available to Vermont students, teachers, and parents through the convenient medium of a school book fair.

The idea behind book fairs has been to expose children to good literature which would increase their reading pleasure as well as sharpen their reading taste.

The goal of the program has been to introduce quality literature which was unfamiliar to children, parents, and teachers, and make it available to them at convenient prices.

Country Caravan has sponsored about 60 book fairs each year throughout the state of Vermont. In some schools only students and teachers have participated. However, more and more schools have been holding book fairs at night so parents and other community members may attend and purchase books. Schools benefit from the book fairs in two ways:

- Discounts of 10 to 15% on books purchased
- A direct 10% profit from gross sales.

The target audience has been the children in Vermont schools. However, increased numbers of book fairs have been held for other members of the community.

STUDENT READING MOTIVATION, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIORS

The results of the survey of students revealed, not surprisingly, that measures of student reading motivation, attitudes, and behavior all showed definite declines from the early elementary grades through high school. While differences were noted in the rates of decline in the various measures used to assess reading motivation, attitudes, and behaviors, analysis of the data collected did not reveal significant association between the changes in motivation and variables other than grade.

The major findings revealed through an examination of survey responses provided by students in grades 1-3 and 4-12 are summarized below.

Grades 1-3

The majority of students in grades 1-3 read because it was fun rather than because they had to (84% vs. 16%). When asked if they thought they were good readers, 71% of students in grades 1-3 responded affirmatively. The percentage of these students declined from 75% of first graders to 62% of the third graders. Approximately, 15% of the surveyed students said they were "not sure" if they were good readers. When asked if others thought they were good readers, there was a decline from 62% in grade 1 to 48% of third graders who felt others thought they were good readers. When contrasted with their self perception of reading ability, student responses indicated they were less secure in their perceived ability.

In the fall, first grade surveyed students expressed a preference for games and activities such as drawing rather than reading. This seemed to be a logical consequence of the fact that not many first graders knew how to read at the onset of the school year. This preference was reinforced in first grade student responses to several questions, i.e., "Would you rather ... read or play games; draw a picture or read; receive a book or game as a present?" Second and third grade

students showed an increased, albeit only slight, preference for reading when compared to first grade students. When compared to each other, they showed no apparent difference. However, the majority of second and third graders would still prefer to receive games rather than books as gifts.

When queried about preferences to watch a story on television or read a story, students in grades 1-3 showed a slight preference to watch a story on television. When compared to one another, there was virtually no difference between students in the three grades regarding their almost negligible preference for television (52% vs. 48%).

Students in grades 1-3 in response to the questions "Do you read almost every day or just once in awhile," and "How often do you read at home" showed that students in general do not read daily by choice. The majority indicated that they liked to read "once in awhile," or "almost every day" at home (70% and 71%, respectively). Daily reading activity appeared to increase as grade level increased.

The majority of students surveyed in grades 1-3 utilized a library and brought books home, and the use of the library showed a slight increase from first through third grades (52% to 59%).

Grades 4-12

The attitudes which students in grades 4 through 12 had toward reading was generally positive. However, positive attitudes which those students had toward reading declined steadily from a high of 84% in grade 4 to 49% in grade 12.

Student perceptions toward self as reader showed a similar, though less dramatic decline from a high of slightly less than 70% for fourth and fifth graders to approximately 53% for 12th graders.

The responses of students in grades 4 through 12 suggested that reading may be closely associated with choice of reading materials. Between 77 and 88% of students in all grades reported that they enjoyed choosing books for themselves, and over half the students in all grades reported "extra reading about something which interests them." Study results also indicated significant declines in the amount of time spent reading "books" and significant increases in the amount of time spent reading newspapers and magazines.

A considerable discrepancy exists between what students report they read and what their parents perceive they are reading. For instance, while 41% of the students surveyed indicated that they read school books on a usual day, nearly 83% of the parents reported that their children read school books on a usual day. Similarly, 26% of the students indicated that they read information books on a usual day, and 50% of the parents thought that their children read information books on a usual day. Data indicate that pleasure books are read by a larger percentage of student than any other reading material included in the survey. The specific material read by the smallest percentage of students was information books.

Table 13, Student Reports and Parent Reports of Students' Preferred Reading, includes data concerning students' reported reading preferences, and parents' perceptions of their children's reading preferences. Reasonable consistency existed between student reports and parent perceptions in the areas of school books, pleasure books, and reference books. Considerable disparity is found between student reports and parent perceptions in the areas of information books, newspapers, magazines, and comic books. In each of these instances, a greater percentage of students indicated a preference for these materials than was perceived by their parents. This is consistent with findings which indicate that school books and information books are preferred least by students, and pleasure books are preferred by a greater percentage of students than any other reading material included in the study.

TABLE 13

STUDENT REPORTS AND PARENT REPORTS
OF STUDENTS' PREFERRED READING (%)

	Students	Parents
	Which of the following do you prefer to read?	Which of the following does your child prefer to read?
School Books	35.24	31.97
Pleasure Books	83.14	83.76
Information Books (Biography/History)	36.48	11.14
Newspaper	45.88	27.54
Magazines	70.20	49.41
Comic Books	59.66	42.54
Reference Books	7.95	9.88
Other	13.17	6.25
TOTALS	43.96	32.28

When parents were asked whether or not they enjoyed reading, and how important reading is in daily life and work, 90.1% of the parents surveyed indicated that reading was very important or important in their daily life and work. Only 4.7% indicated that reading was not very important or unimportant.

When parents were asked, "Have you heard about the Reading is Fundamental program?" 84% of the parents surveyed, at the first grade level, gave an affirmative response to this question. After the first grade, there is a gradual decline to 65.9% affirmative responses. A second category of data deals with the source of parents' information about Reading is Fundamental. At every grade level, the greatest percentage of parents learned about RIF from television. Children and school were about equal as sources of information about RIF for parents of children in grades 1 through 12, although more parents of first graders were informed about RIF than were parents of twelfth graders.

When parents were asked "Would you like your child's school or your community to have a RIF program?" 71% affirmatively answered, 1.5% said "no," and 23.7% indicated they needed more information.

Another interesting finding was the response about book ownership. Over 96% of parents said their children owned books; and when asked how many, 49.5% said their children owned more than 25 books.

SUMMARY

In the absence of a follow-on survey of parents, students, principals, teachers, librarians, volunteers, and State Right to Read Directors which was scheduled for the spring of 1980, there exists no basis for assessing the impact of the RIF IBDP on student reading motivation, nor for assessing the impact of the program from the standpoint of program operators and participants. However, based on data collected in this study, GRC has identified several aspects of the RIF IBDP which warrant further study and/or where actions can be taken to improve the local and national management of RIF IBDPs.

The major observations and recommendations which have been derived from this study are summarized in terms of programmatic features associated with:

- The national management of the RIF IBDP
- Technical assistance needs for local RIF IBDP subcontractors

RIF National Management

GRC's examination of the RIF national management program led to the conclusion that the national management system was generally effective with respect to conveying and promoting the objectives of the RIF IBDP. However, in the development of this study it was determined that some discrepancies exist between subcontractor data maintained by RIF national and the actual characteristics of local RIF IBDPs. These discrepancies were found in:

- Local IBDP funding levels
- The number of staff and students participating in the local IBDPs
- The number of schools participating in local IBDPs

While the implementation of RIF national's new computerized management information system will enable RIF national to maintain better records regarding subcontractor IBDPs, the maintenance of accurate records regarding the operating characteristics of IBDPs would require implementation of procedures for both collecting more comprehensive and more accurate information about local subcontracrors and for verifying program data provided by local subcontractors.

A major concern of subcontractors was payment to book suppliers. Perhaps the computerized management information system will speed up other RIF functions so this problem will be reduced. If not, planning on how to implement a more efficient payment system for book suppliers should be conducted at the national level.

The public information activities which have been undertaken by RIF national have resulted in a significant increase in the number of communities wishing to initiate IBDPs. A major stimulus for the development of new IBDPs is the availability of Federal matching funds. Until 1979 RIF matched local contributions 50-50. New provisions of the legislation allowed RIF to match local funds on a 75-25 basis. This increased level of Federal funding decreased the number of new projects which could be funded during the transition year, and in the future will restrict and possibly decrease the level of funding available to ongoing IBDPs. Thus, legislation which was intended to stimulate the development of new programs has limited the degree to which RIF national can promote new programs. There are, however, many other forms of support which can be provided by RIF national and which can effectively contribute to expansion of locally sponsored IBDPs. Among the major actions which can be taken by RIF national are:

- Programs of technical assistance to potential new IBDP operators.
- The development of materials such as "how to" guides and training materials which may be used by new (and existing) programs to aid local operators in identifying activities which may be used to promote parent involvement in local programs and to otherwise enhance the quality of book distribution activities.

One of the major assumptions underlying the RIF IBDP is that it will increase the student's reading motivation through book ownership and books in the home; however, the findings of this study suggest that the majority of the student participants in local RIF IBDPs already own many books (81.6% of parent respondents indicated that children own from 5 to more than 25 books). Given this finding there is some question as to the extent to which the distribution of three additional books will significantly change student reading motivation. Rather, it may be hypothesized that the RIF IBDP impact on student reading motivation may be found in the effectiveness of the activities developed for the book selection process and the

degree to which enthusiasm for reading can be engendered by the process of RIF IBDP book distributions. This hypothesis is indicated by field observations which suggest that increases in student reading motivation appear to be correlated with projects which have strong leadership; active parental participation; active community volunteer participation; and well planned, well organized pre- and postdistribution activities. Further research into the impact of distributional activities on student reading attitudes appears to be warranted; this hypothesis, if supported, would provide further support for the recommendation presented above for the development of training materials which could be used by local RIF IBDP subcontractors in the planning and implementation of more effective programs.

Technical Assistance Needs of RIF IBDP Subcontractors

The RIF IBDPs examined in this study were each initiated and planned by local organizations with minimum knowledge of procedures and activities which had been used and found successful in other programs. At present, there exists no organized vehicle for the exchange of information regarding practices which may or may not be most viable and effective for most RIF IBDP subcontractors in alternative settings. The principal source of ideas and general assistance in program planning and implementation has come in the form of general program description pamphlets provided by RIF national and technical assistance provided by RIF national in response to specific inquiries. However, due to the limited research which has been conducted to date, RIF national does not generally have available the kind of detailed information needed to guide local program planners in the design and implementation of programs likely to be responsive to the needs in their own settings. Moreover, RIF national has not had the capacity to provide in-depth assistance, particularly onsite, of the type needed to most effectively help local subcontractors design and implement effective programs. At present and because of the limited staff of RIF national, most technical assistance takes the form of responses to specific questions rather than providing the type of in-depth support needed to explore alternative strategies and plan effective programs for fund raising, recruiting volunteers, selecting and distributing books, etc.

An expansion of the technical assistance activities provided by RIF national is needed to:

- Support more effectively the development and expansion of existing programs
- Provide assistance to newly funded subcontractors
- Provide general assistance to community groups seeking to implement IBDPs but not receiving funds from RIF national
- Provide linkages between RIF IBDP and other reading motivation programs

An expansion of RIF national technical assistance programs should be approached through:

- The development of additional materials which can be provided to local subcontractors to help them with all phases of program planning, implementation, and operation.
- The development of a network for information exchange among local subcontractors and other organizations which have established book distribution programs.
- An increase in the number of RIF national staff persons available to provide technical assistance to local subcontractors.

In addition to these activities, consideration should be given to establishing a toll-free incoming telephone line to enable subcontractors to more easily access appropriate RIF national personnel for purposes of providing technical assistance.

This study was not sufficiently comprehensive to clearly identify all issues on which local subcontractors require technical assistance. While responses provided by subcontractors clearly establish the need for some form of technical assistance, the most effective form in which this assistance may be provided and the particular information which is

most sought by local program operators is not definitively established. Therefore, it is recommended that RIF national undertake a study to identify the specific technical assistance needs of local program operators. This study should be undertaken as the basis for material development and as a basis for planning a formalized program of technical assistance to be provided by RIF national personnel, either through a telephone network or through an expanded program of onsite assistance to new and expanding local subcontractor programs.